displayed timeless grandeur through Beaux-Arts buildings filled with sculptures and mural paintings by academic artists. Soon after the Chicago fair, the White City/City Beautiful Movement arrived in Washington, where the Beaux-Arts mode expanded well beyond temporary structures imitating masonry to include permanent buildings constructed from masonry, specifically the Library of Congress. Moreover, this movement had a profound impact on the Senate Park Commission's creation of the McMillan Plan in 1901–1902. Named after the commission's chairman, Sen. James McMillan (1838–1902) of Michigan, this report proposed ideas for the development of the city's monumental core and park system.

One of many institutions that participated in the exposition, the library exhibited manuscripts related to Columbus, for which it received an award, as well as a model of the Main Reading Room. Besides contributing to the success of this fair, the library also drew inspiration that, in turn, contributed to the success of its design.

Initially, the library was envisioned by its first architects, John L. Smithmeyer (1832–1908) and Paul J. Pelz (1841–1918), as a rather austere Italian Renaissance palazzo with projecting pavilions at the four corners and at the center of the front façade, as can be seen in their 1873 drawing (fig. 2). Over the next two decades, however, the library underwent dramatic changes in appearance, specifically through several significant modifications that drew from the exposition. Although the library retained its original form, it became far grander, reflecting the fair's monumental architecture, such as the U.S. Government Building (fig. 3) by Windrim & Edbrooke, a Washington, D.C. firm. Also designed as an Italian Renaissance palazzo with projecting pavilions, this structure, unlike the library's 1873 design, included a dome crowning its rotunda and a plethora of exterior statuary.

The impact of the World's Columbian Exposition is even more apparent in the designs for the Library of Congress's interiors. More than 25 artists from the fair accepted library commissions, for which they were,

Fig. 3. U.S. Government Building at the World's Columbian Exposition *(watercolor, 1893) is one of several images of the World's Fair painted by the famous American Impressionist F. Childe Hassam (1859–1935).*

in essence, expected to recreate either the same or similar works that they had previously designed for Chicago.[2] Through the exposition's designers and their art, the library emerged as a permanent manifestation of this temporary fair.

For the library, the exposition's artists created architectural statuary for attachment to the building, sculpture in the round to stand within this structure, and, chiefly, mural paintings for the walls and ceilings. The origins of American mural design can be traced back to the imagery of two highly influential and innovative artists: John La Farge (1835–1910) and William Morris Hunt (1824–1879), both of whom brought this art form to the public sphere.[3] Between 1877 and 1879, La Farge created a series of murals for Trinity Church in Boston, while in 1878, Hunt completed two lunettes for the New York State Capitol in Albany. Despite these groundbreaking works by La Farge and Hunt, mural painting at first did not become an established art medium. A highly versatile artist, La Farge chose to focus more on his experiments with stained glass after his Boston commission. Having suffered from a crippling depression for many years, Hunt committed suicide in 1879. Consequently, in the 1880s, the development of mural painting waned.

It was not until the World's Columbian Exposition opened nearly 20 years after Hunt and La Farge produced their images that mural painting experienced its earliest flourishing on a large scale. This flowering occurred through extensive study and subsequent promotion by several of the fair's artists, especially Edwin Howland Blashfield (1848–1936), who later became a master in the field of mural painting. In Boston, he began his training with Hunt, who inspired him to pursue a career as a muralist. Blashfield then continued his education in Paris with the academic mural painter Léon

Fig. 4. Southwest Pavilion of Liberal Arts Building *(photograph, 1893), by the "Official Photographers" C.D. Arnold and H.D. Higinbotham, was one of a series published as* Official Views of the World's Columbian Exposition *(Chicago, 1893).*

Fig. 5. Gari Melchers's Study for The Arts of War *(oil on canvas, c. 1892) represents one of the artist's earliest efforts working with murals.*

Joseph Florentin Bonnat (1833–1922). After his return to the U.S., Blashfield revived interest in mural painting through his Chicago fair and Library of Congress commissions, his 1912 mural lectures at the Art Institute of Chicago, and his publication of these talks the following year in his book, *Mural Painting in America*.[4] Along with other late nineteenth-century artists, he played a significant role in establishing mural painting as an enduring art form that thrived well into the twentieth century, specifically through commissions for public schools.[5]

For many of the exposition's painters, including the three artists who are the focus of this article, these mural orders were their earliest experiences with this medium. Born Julius Garibaldi Melchers in Detroit, Gari Melchers (1860–1932) first studied art under his father, Julius Theodore Melchers (1829–1908), a leading sculptor and wood carver in that city. Gari Melchers continued his training at the Royal Art Academy in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1877, then, four years later, finished in Paris at the Académie Julian and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. In 1884, he opened his studio in Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands, but often traveled throughout Europe, as well as to the U.S. His earliest images include *The Sermon* (1886), an approximately five-by-seven-foot work depicting a Dutch church service, for which he was awarded an American painting prize at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889.

Having earned recognition for at least one of his large framed paintings, Melchers sought to broaden his skills through murals. He became aware of the mural commissions available at the World's Colum-

bian Exposition and used his connections with some of its patrons and organizers to obtain his own contract in 1892. Those figures included Chicago merchant Potter Palmer (1826–1902) and his wife, philanthropist Bertha Honoré (1849–1918), as well as Francis Davis Millet (1846–1912), an academic artist and the fair's Director of Decorations. Moreover, Melchers ensured his likelihood of acquiring one by exhibiting *The Sermon* at the fair's Palace of Fine Arts. He subsequently received an order for the biggest of the exposition's structures, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, designed by George Browne Post (1837–1913). A significant architect who contributed to the development of commercial architecture, Post engaged many artists to paint murals for this structure's exterior and interior. For the southwest pavilion (fig. 4), Melchers was hired to create two lunettes based on subjects of his choice and with his titles of *The Arts of War* and *The Arts of Peace*. Despite its name, *The Arts of War* (fig. 5) represents a successful hunt, rather than a battle. In the center, an ancient chieftain riding on horseback returns home with his armed men, including two hunters on the left carrying a slain deer between them on a horizontal pole. In *The Arts of Peace* (fig. 6), a high priest in the middle leads a group of Greco-Roman worshipers bearing offerings to a shrine with a seated statue of Minerva, the Roman equivalent of the Greek Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, the arts, and defensive war. On the left, other figures acquire knowledge through study, an activity in which everyone participates, regardless of gender or age.

Fig. 6. Like its companion piece, Melchers's Study for the Arts of Peace *(oil on canvas, 1893) served as the design for one of the colossal 40-foot diameter lunettes in the Southwest Pavilion of the Columbian Exposition's Liberal Arts Building.*

Melchers's two murals were so widely admired that, after the exposition closed, the University of Michigan wanted to have them as an example of this native-born artist. Initially displayed in an activities center on the Ann Arbor campus, they were transferred in 1920 to the recently constructed Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library. Its main reading room was specifically designed with a barrel-vaulted ceiling to accommodate these paintings above the windows at either end.

With the success of his first murals and their relocation to the University of Michigan, Melchers had no difficulty in obtaining a commission at the Library of Congress. In 1895, he was engaged to paint two lunettes for the Northwest Gallery on the second floor. To his dismay, though, he was instructed to recreate his Chicago murals, whereas he wanted to produce a landscape and waterscape. On 27 May 1896, Melchers wrote to Bernard Richardson Green (1843–1914), the Engineer and Superintendent of construction of the library, "you had blue prints of my once proposed sketches 'Land' and 'Water'. Now that these ideas have been discarded and definitely abandoned, at least for the Library Building, would you mind my asking of you to keep these things very much in the back ground, or perhaps suppress them altogether. I should so much prefer the same not to be seen by any body, as I hope to be able to use these ideas on some future occasion."[6]

Having reluctantly relinquished his wish to paint land and water themes, Melchers nevertheless found a way to avoid making replicas of his exposition murals and completed his library commission in 1896. Although the names of these paintings, the *Mural of War* and the *Mural of Peace*, are almost duplicates of his Chicago titles, what he depicted is strikingly different, especially in the *Mural of Peace*. Unlike *The Arts of War*, the *Mural of War* (fig. 7) does represent the result of a battle. Crowned with a laurel wreath of victory, the equestrian chieftain and his warriors return home following a successful conflict. The slain deer carried on a pole has been replaced in the center with a fallen comrade born on a stretcher. In the *Mural of Peace* (fig. 8), the pursuit of knowledge that is so integral to *The Arts of Peace* is inexplicably absent. Instead, the entire composition is filled with a religious procession. The ancient priest leads his fellow worshipers to a secluded location, where a ceremony will take place, culminating in the sacrifice of a garlanded bull on the right. The stone pedestal supporting the sculpture of Minerva in full armor has now become a portable shrine in the middle surmounted by a small statue of an unidentified, seated goddess. Despite the differences between the exposition and library lunettes, they are united by the theme of prosperity. This idea can be seen in a successful hunt, a pyrrhic victory, the availability of knowledge to all, and
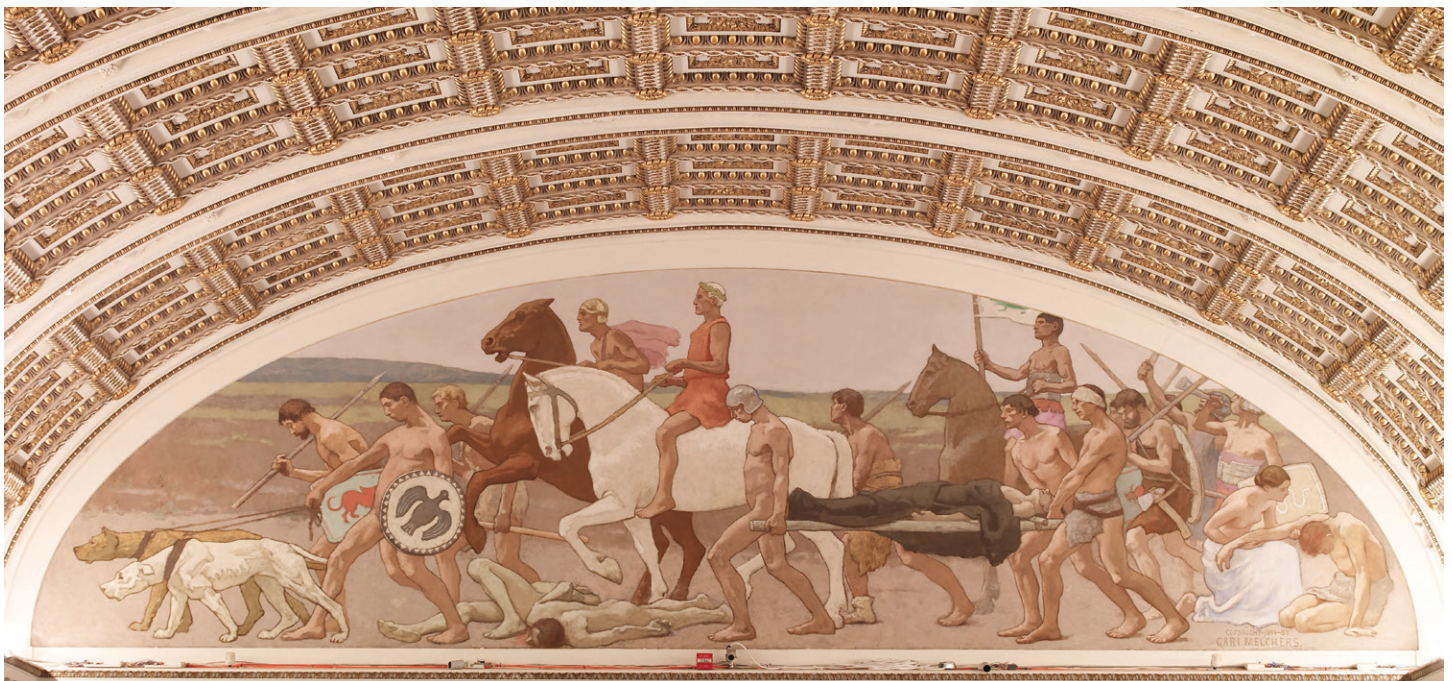

Fig. 7. Melchers returned to one of his Columbian Exposition's themes in his lunette, Mural of War *(oil on canvas, 1895–96), for the Thomas Jefferson Building's second-floor Northwest Gallery.*
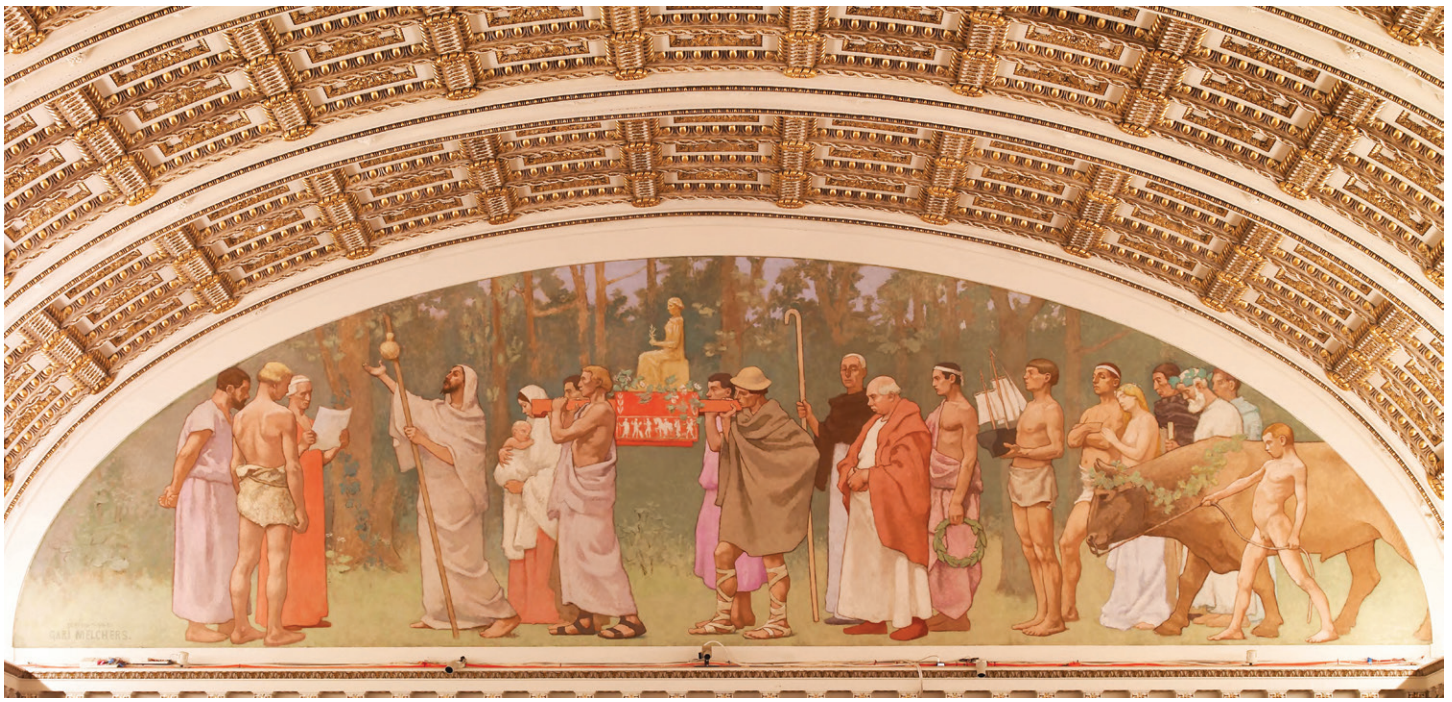
Fig. 8. Even more than his Mural of War*, the composition of Melcher's lunette,* Mural of Peace *(oil on canvas, 1895–96), also in the Thomas Jefferson Building's second-floor Northwest Gallery, departs radically from its Chicago counterpart.*

the bringing of offerings to a guardian deity.

Unlike many other works of art at the World's Columbian Exposition, Melchers's murals were not lost with the fair's closing. Originally meant to exist just for a short time, his images instead came under the protection of the University of Michigan. Along with the Library of Congress paintings, his exposition panels are permanently displayed in an institution of learning.

As in Melchers's case, William de Leftwich Dodge (1867–1935) wanted to extend his talents through murals. Born in Liberty (now Bedford), Virginia, Dodge began to study art in 1882 in Paris at the Académie Colarossi, which also preparing for his entrance examinations for the École des Beaux-Arts. Proving his perseverance, he was finally accepted in 1885 after having attempted five times to enroll in this extremely prestigious school. However, he had no difficulty in attaining accolades for his first large painting, *The Death of Minnehaha* (1885), an approximately seven-by-ten-foot work. Based on *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) by the prominent poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), this image depicts the demise of Hiawatha's beloved Minnehaha during a winter famine. For this painting, Dodge earned a gold medal from the American Art Association in New York in 1888. The following

year, he moved to New York and established his studio there in the hope of building on his success from the monumental *Death of Minnehaha*.

In 1891, Dodge learned about the construction of the World's Columbian Exposition and went to Chicago in search of a mural commission. Although he made sketches of murals that other artists were designing for the fair's structures, he was unable to obtain an order for himself. Nevertheless, one opportunity did remain available: the dome of the Administration Building, the exposition's tallest edifice, designed by Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1895), the dean of American architecture and the younger brother of William Morris Hunt. Convinced that the dome commission was meant for him, Dodge immediately returned to New York, where Richard Morris Hunt operated his office. At the architect's headquarters, however, Dodge encountered obstacles similar to what he had experienced when trying to be admitted into the École des Beaux-Arts. Describing these challenges in his autobiographical account, as well as to his daughter, Sara Pryor Dodge Kimbrough (1901–1990), Dodge wrote:

I had such a hard time trying to get into his office; the boy in the entrance said nobody

could see Mr. Hunt. I made such a fuss, saying I would sit there until he came out, that his son heard me and came out to see what the row was about. I told him I wanted to see his father and wanted to paint his dome. My determination must have impressed him as he took me in to see his father. The old man started to cuss me out and then laughed at the gall of a kid my age (I was twenty-four then) thinking I could paint his dome which was three hundred and fifteen feet in circumference by fifty feet deep. I used some pretty strong language myself and told him that after he had seen my work if he didn't think I was capable of painting it, he could get someone else to do his damned dome, but that I was the best he could get, and I started showing him painting after painting until his office was covered."[7]

Like his son, Hunt was deeply impressed, and he imme-

Fig. 9. Wiliam de Leftwich Dodge created his Study for the Glorification of the Arts and Sciences (oil on canvas, 1893) for the allegorical mural decorating the dome of the Exposition's Administration Building.

Fig. 10. William de Leftwich Dodge's Mural of Art *(oil on canvas, 1895-96) decorates the Thomas Jefferson Building's second-floor Northwest Pavilion—also known as the Pavilion of Art and Science.*

diately offered Dodge the commission.

Dodge became the youngest artist employed at the Chicago fair. Realizing he could not fulfill an order of such a colossal scale on his own, he asked his younger brother, the mural painter Robert Leftwich Dodge (1872–1940), to join him as his assistant. In this collaboration, William de Leftwich Dodge made a design based on his idea, while both brothers executed this design for the Administration Building's dome. Together, they created *The Glorification of the Arts and Sciences* (fig. 9), a circular mural depicting Phoebus Apollo, the Greco-Roman god of light, music, and poetry, seated on a marble throne at the top of a

curved staircase and bestowing honors, as a procession of allegorical figures representing various arts and sciences approaches him.

The *Glorification* painting was so well-received that William de Leftwich Dodge won a medal. Determined to earn still higher recognition—in this case, from the federal government—he read about mural commissions for the Library of Congress and secured one only by submitting numerous sketches. Whereas Melchers's contract had been for the Northwest Gallery, Dodge was engaged in 1895 to work in the Northwest Pavilion, located at the opposite end of this room. Coincidentally, Robert Leftwich Dodge also obtained a

Fig. 11. Mural of Music *(oil on canvas, 1895-96), in the Thomas Jefferson Building's Northwest Pavilion, reintroduces the Greek and Roman god Apollo from Dodge's Columbian Exposition's* Glorification.

Fig. 12. William de Leftwich Dodge's Mural of Literature *(oil on canvas, 1895–96), in the Thomas Jefferson Building's second-floor Northwest Pavilion, derived from one of the four themes he first introduced in Chicago's* The Glorification of the Arts and Sciences.

library order, in his case, for the Southeast Pavilion on the second floor.

For the Northwest Pavilion, William de Leftwich Dodge painted four lunettes and the dome, completing them in 1896. Like his Chicago fair mural, these five paintings derived from his ideas, and, in essence, are replicas of his exposition work. Through his murals *Art*, *Music*, *Literature*, and *Science*, Dodge divided *The Glorification of the Arts and Sciences* into four paintings. Along with their titles, the library panels also share some of the same figures from the Administration Building dome. In the *Mural of Art* (fig. 10), the fine

arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture are no longer part of a procession with other personifications, but form the focus of this composition. Absent from *Art*, Apollo does appear in the *Mural of Music* (fig. 11), in which the divinity, sitting on an exedra, plays a more active role in the creation of this art by composing music on his lyre, as other performers join him, rather than only by presiding over its production.

As the focal point in the *Mural of Literature* (fig. 12), Apollo reads aloud from a book in his lap. Among the many figures listening to the seated deity is a kneeling female nude to the right who embraces a standing

Fig. 13. Dodge's Mural of Science *(oil on canvas, 1895–96) completes the series of four lunettes around the base of the domed ceiling in the Northwest Pavilion of the Thomas Jefferson Building.*

Fig. 14. William de Leftwich Dodge's sketches for his Library of Congress murals Music, Art, Literature, *and* Science *(oil on canvas, 1895), seen in this photographic print from 1898 or 1899, indicate some subtle but significant differences from the final versions.*

nude boy with her left arm, while her right hand rests on the head of another child who kneels next to her. In the *Glorification* dome, both the woman and the standing boy, as mirror images, occupy the left side of the staircase. Although not actually included in the *Mural of Science* (fig. 13), Apollo, as in *Art*, is indirectly present through the other figures. In the center, with bowed head and extended arms, a kneeling scientist presents his invention: the phonograph. The inventor's purple clothing and humble pose are exact duplicates of those of the supplicant-like figure on the stairs bow-

ing before the enthroned divinity in the dome. Flying down toward the kneeling man in both murals is a winged allegorical figure of Victory holding a laurel wreath, the traditional accoutrement of Apollo and the reward for successful endeavors, to bestow upon him. In comparison to Dodge's sketch for *Science* (fig. 14), however, which shows Victory serenely hovering above the kneeling inventor and placing the garland on his brow, Victory in the finished version, as well as in the *Glorification* mural, more dramatically swoops down toward him, almost tumbling out of the sky. This sense

Fig. 15. The domed ceiling of the Thomas Jefferson Building's Northwest Pavilion (the Pavilion of Art and Science) showcases William De Leftwich Dodge's mural Ambition *(oil on canvas, 1895–96).*

of drama is even further heightened in the Northwest Pavilion's crowning mural.

Accompanying the paintings *Art, Music, Literature,* and *Science* is Dodge's mural for the dome, *Ambition* (fig. 15). In this work, the artist united his four lunettes to create a composition reminiscent of *The Glorification of the Arts and Sciences* in Chicago. However, this is where the similarity ends. Whereas the Administration Building's dome shows humankind's achievements being acknowledged through a stately procession, in *Ambition*, humanity's quest for recognition for accomplishments has instead become a chaotic obsession. A group of figures standing along the top of a classical architectural element struggles against one another for awards, even to the point of committing murder. With outstretched arms, the people strive to reach the personification of the Unattainable Ideal in the sky, who clutches a laurel wreath of victory and a palm frond of peace in her left hand while holding onto the winged horse Pegasus with the other. Both woman

and horse are joined by an allegorical figure of Fame blowing a long trumpet. Instead of kneeling and waiting for honors to be conferred upon them, just as the humble inventor in the *Glorification* mural does, the impatient figures in *Ambition* attempt to seize these rewards. Rather than descending from the heavens to bestow accolades upon worthy recipients, exactly as the *Glorification* Victory does, the Unattainable Ideal holds these tributes out of the grasp of these figures who have been driven mad by their ambition.

The only source of calmness in this composition can be found in the jester located to the right of this out-of-control group. Dodge provided the reason for the presence of this figure when he discussed his work during a conversation in Paris with his friend and fellow artist, Frederick William MacMonnies, who received a commission for the main entrance to the Library of Congress. As Dodge explained, "this jester is laughing at the ambitious ones for he believes, as the crowned skull atop a scepter in his hand indicates, that fame

comes only after death to those who have slaved during life."[8] In this conversation, Dodge was undoubtedly referring to his sketch for *Ambition* (fig. 16) because he only mentioned the laurel-crowned skull that the jester has in his left hand. In the finished version, though, the figure's right hand holds a small statue of Victory. With a laurel wreath and palm frond in her outstretched arms, Victory strongly resembles another representation of this allegorical figure at the library, as seen in the mosaic work *Minerva* by Elihu Vedder.

Elihu Vedder (1836–1923) had a far different experience from his first mural commission than did Melchers and Dodge. Born in New York, he studied with various artists in Paris and Florence from 1856 to 1857. As with his education, he also pursued his career in different cities, operating his studio in New York and Paris between 1861 and 1866. He permanently settled in Rome in 1869, but, like Melchers, traveled to the U.S. on a regular basis.

Although Vedder created numerous paintings, he is best known as a book illustrator, specifically through his fifty-four drawings for the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, a selection of poems attributed to the Persian writer Omar Khayyám (1048–1131), which the artist executed for an 1884 deluxe edition of the first English translation by the British poet Edward FitzGerald (1809–1883). These illustrations were so well-received that the artist made at least one painting based on one of his drawings, *The Cup of Death*, derived from the forty-ninth quatrain of the *Rubáiyát*. With the success of this commission, his popularity reached its first peak in 1885.

Vedder was still celebrated for his production of art in different media even in the following decade. When the construction of the World's Columbian Exposition was well underway in 1892, two of his friends and colleagues,

Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909), one of the founders of McKim, Mead & White, the premier architectural firm in the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century, approached him to see if he would be interested in participating in the fair. Less than one month after speaking with Saint-Gaudens and McKim, Vedder received a letter inviting him to contribute murals to the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, the same structure that Melchers also worked on. Despite his lack of experience in mural painting, the artist reluctantly accepted this commission.

Once in Chicago, Vedder's hesitation quickly turned into panic, as he saw the hectic pace of the fair's construction and the blatant disregard for safety. In a letter dated 21 August 1892 to his dentist father, Dr. Elihu Vedder, Sr. (1802–1896), he expressed his despair about his work load:

> I am simply wild with what I have to do and the confusion about me. I live right next to the exposition grounds and pass my days there trying to get started with my work. They want me to do 4 painted panels to go in a large dome. These panels are 12 feet in diameter and must be done in 4 months. I am to get 6 thousand dollars for them and could I have known in time I would have found the task easy but as it is I don't know about it. Of course there are great expenses attending this sort of thing and not much of that money will get to my pocket but it will be a great feather in my cap if I succeed.[9]

Fig. 16. Dodge's sketch for his mural Ambition *(oil on canvas, c. 1895) is preserved in this photographic print from just a few years later (1898 or 1899).*

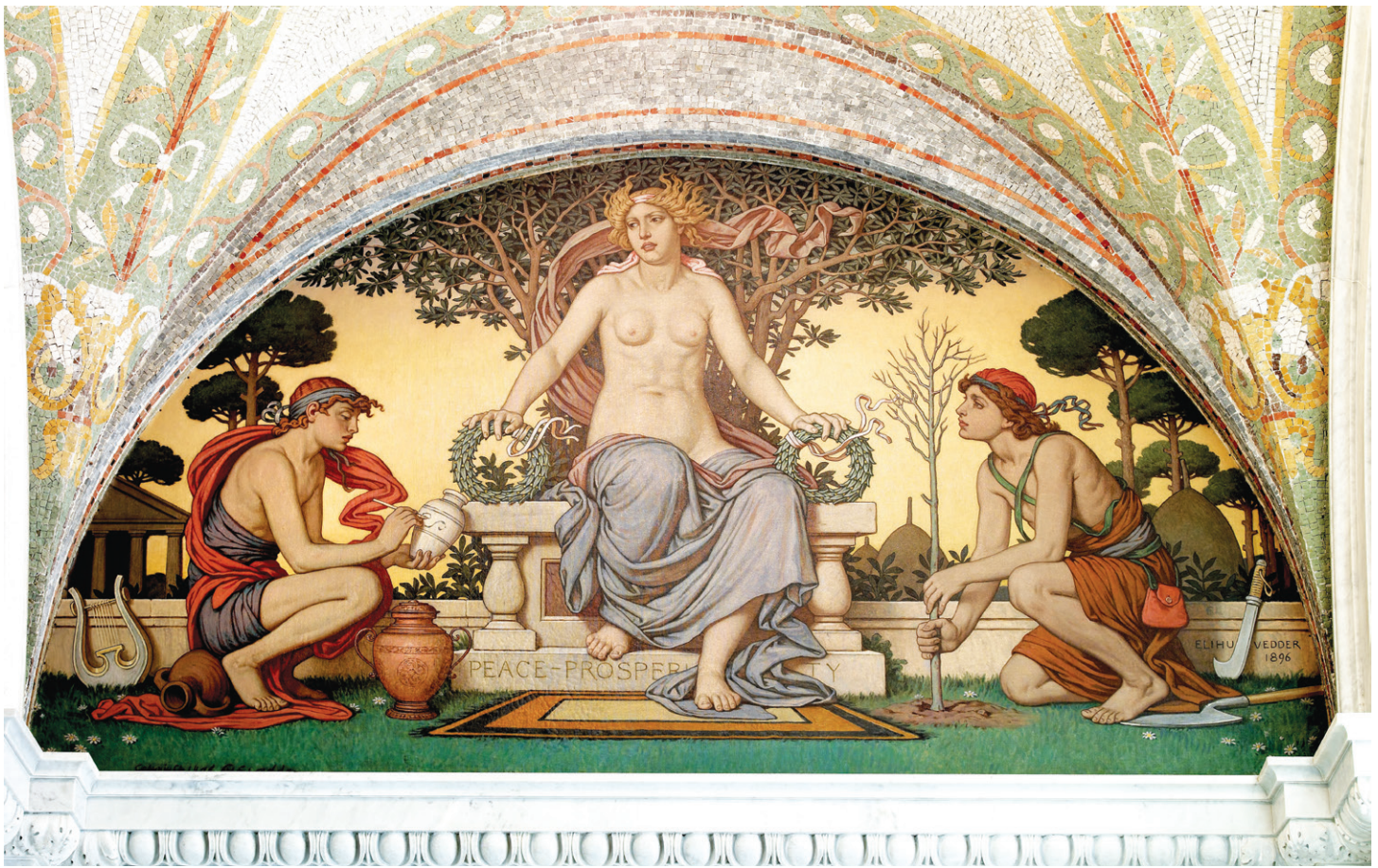The four painted panels for the Manufactures and Liberal

Fig. 17. Elements in Elihu Vedder's mural Peace–Prosperity *(oil on canvas, 1895–96), in the lobby to the Main Reading Room of the Thomas Jefferson Building, can be traced to the artist's commemorative medal* Fortune, *for the Columbian Exposition.*

Arts Building were meant for one of its eight domes. The subjects focused on the arts and sciences, though Vedder did not state exactly what he was expected to produce. Nevertheless, the thought of standing on a scaffold beneath his assigned dome and possibly falling off it while working on these murals filled him with dread. He therefore turned down this mural commission, which was immediately assigned to another artist.[10]

Vedder's refusal to paint murals for the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, however, did not mark the end of his association with Chicago. When he had accepted the dome order, he also agreed to design a commemorative medal for the fair. In spite of relinquishing the mural contract, he not only kept the other contract, but carried it through to fruition with a design called *Fortune*. Based on this picture, each medal was cast in bronze and silver in 1892 and 1893 and bore, on the reverse, a dedication to one of the exposition's directors or designers. The name of the medal, though,

comes from its obverse. Seated in a winged chariot, a nude personification of Fortune holds a palm frond in her raised right hand, while her left hand rests on a cornucopia, from which coins spill out.

Through his *Fortune* medal, Vedder finally attained success at the World's Columbian Exposition. Moreover, despite refusing the opportunity to decorate Post's fair building, an arrangement made through McKim, the painter nevertheless received and fulfilled other mural commissions for Post's Collis Potter Huntington residence in New York and McKim's Walker Art Building at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine between 1892 and 1894.

In 1895, Vedder was given a contract at the Library of Congress as the result of another rejection. John La Farge had become so prominent through his pioneering developments in mural painting that he had been offered this order first. However, he promptly declined it because he believed the proposed salary was too low. Vedder was then approached based on his

mural experience and accepted the commission for five paintings for the Main Reading Room Vestibule in the east corridor on the first floor.

Completed the following year, Vedder's lunettes depict his theme of the consequences of good and bad government, as represented by *Government, Good Administration, Peace–Prosperity, Corrupt Legislation*, and *Anarchy*. Whereas the artist offered a diagram showing the arrangement of his proposed subjects in a 25 February 1895 letter to Bernard Richardson Green, his wife, Elizabeth Caroline (Carrie) Beach Rosekrans (1846–1909), provided descriptions of the compositions in her 6 July 1895 letter to the construction superintendent. Regarding *Peace–Prosperity* (fig. 17), originally titled *Peace* in her spouse's earlier version, Caroline Vedder wrote, "Peace reigns over a thriving country, husbandry and the arts are cultivated and for honest labor there are

the crowns of merit."[11]

In two of the library murals, *Peace–Prosperity* and *Corrupt Legislation*, elements from *Fortune* can be seen, more clearly so in the drawing for this medal. Both *Fortune* and *Peace–Prosperity* show a seated, nude allegorical figure: Fortune in the former, Peace in the latter. Fortune's heavenly chariot in the drawing has become Peace's earthly throne in the painting, while the palm frond and cornucopia are now a pair of laurel wreaths. Nevertheless, the ideas of peace and prosperity, as symbolized by the palm and cornucopia in the drawing, remain in the mural through its subsequent title, *Peace–Prosperity*, and subject. Both Fortune and Peace bestow rewards; however, this distribution is conducted through different means. Instead of slightly tipping a cornucopia forward, as Fortune does, causing the coins to rain down indiscriminately from the sky, while turn-

Fig. 18. Vedder's Corrupt Legislation *(oil on canvas, c. 1898) is one of five lunettes adorning the lobby to the Main Reading Room of the Thomas Jefferson Building.*

ing her head away, Peace faces the recipients of her laurels: two youths, representing the Arts and Agriculture, who kneel on either side of her dais. In his subsequent commission for the library, the *Minerva* mosaic, executed between 1896 and 1897, Vedder united the palm from *Fortune* and the laurel from *Peace–Prosperity* through the personification of Victory.

In a similar vein, the artist replicated the *Fortune* cornucopia in another library lunette, *Corrupt Legislation* (fig. 18). However, this is where the similarity ends. The benevolent Fortune has been replaced by a sinister allegorical figure of Corruption. Caroline Vedder also described this mural, initially called *Corruption*, in her letter to Green: "Wealth is loading the scales, has the ballot urn overthrown, and his factories are in full blaze, while the chimneys of the poor laborers are cold and deserted and the hungry children ask vainly for work. The golden horns are full but are pouring in to Corruption who can spare nothing for the poor."[12]

The full horns to which Caroline Vedder referred are the two cornucopias on either side of the enthroned Corruption. Both the cornucopias and the bag of coins that Wealth, a personification in the form of an elderly man seated next to Corruption, places on the scale that she holds, indicate the vast resources to which Corruption has access. This tremendous affluence dwarfs the single cornucopia beside Fortune in the exposition drawing. Nevertheless, Fortune's limited means flow outward for the benefit of humanity, whereas Corruption's posture prevents any coins from pouring out of her cornucopias. Momentarily distracted from accepting a bribe offered by Wealth, to whom she is turned, Corruption impatiently waves away an impoverished girl representing Labor, who, holding out her empty distaff and spindle, begs for employment. In addition to Corruption's dismissive hand gesture, the position of her right hand hovering above the cornucopia on the left is meant to warn Labor against attempting to take any of these coins. By sitting cross-legged and leaning slightly towards Wealth, Corruption's right leg partly blocks Labor's view of the cornucopia on the right, as well as that of the audience. Instead of staring yearningly at either cornucopia, though, Labor directs her pleading gaze to Corruption, indicating, along with her empty implements, that she wants to work for her livelihood, not steal for it. Like the two young men who are rewarded for the fruits of their artistic and agricultural labors in *Peace–Prosperity*, the destitute child in *Corruption* longs to earn her own crown of merit.

Since Vedder designed a commemorative medal, rather than temporary murals, for the World's Columbian Exposition, his contribution, unlike that of Melchers and Dodge, was never in danger of being lost with the closing of the fair. As in the case of the *Fortune* medal, Vedder's paintings for the Library of Congress were also meant to be permanent works. While, through fortunate circumstances, Melchers's lunettes for the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building's pavilion, as well as Dodge's study for the Administration Building's dome, survive, countless other artworks in Chicago do not.

After the World's Columbian Exposition closed on 30 October 1893, three fires that erupted the following year destroyed almost all of the plaster structures, including both the Manufactures and Liberal Arts and Administration Buildings. While Melchers's paintings had already been relocated to the University of Michigan, Dodge's mural remained in the Administration Building and, like the rest of the edifice, was consumed by flames.

Although the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 had been envisioned and erected as a temporary phenomenon, it attained permanent form in a significant way through the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. More than 25 artists of the highest caliber, including Gari Melchers, William de Leftwich Dodge, and Elihu Vedder, designed works of art that were extremely similar to the ones they had created for the Chicago fair just three years previously. Through their participation at the World's Columbian Exposition and the Library of Congress, all of these artists played enormous roles in bringing the City Beautiful Movement from Chicago to Washington, thus ensuring the legacy of the White City

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NOTES

1. Charles Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York, 1921), 1:47.

2. Besides Gari Melchers, William de Leftwich Dodge, and Elihu Vedder, the other artists were Edwin Howland Blashfield, Robert Leftwich Dodge, Daniel Chester French, Frederick William Mac-Monnies, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Paul Wayland Bartlett (1865–1925), Frank Weston Benson (1862–1951), John Joseph Boyle (1851–1917), Kenyon Cox (1856–1919), Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey (1862–1946), Carl Gutherz (1844–1907), Philip Martiny (1858–1927), George Willoughby Maynard (1843–1923), Walter McEwen (1860–1943), Charles Sprague Pearce (1851–1914), Bela Lyon Pratt (1867–1917), Robert Lewis Reid (1862–1929), Louis Saint-Gaudens (1854–1913), Herman T. Schladermundt (1863–1937), Walter Shirlaw (1838–1909), Edward Emerson Simmons (1852–1931), Henry Oliver Walker (1843–1929), Olin Levi Warner (1844–1896), and Albert Weinert (1863–1947).

3. Sally Webster, "Unitarianism and the Iconography of Democracy: Decorations for the Library of Congress," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* (October 2010), 358, 378.

4. The full title is *Mural Painting in America: The Scammon Lectures, Delivered Before the Art Institute of Chicago, March, 1912, and Since Greatly Enlarged, by Edwin Howland Blashfield; With Numerous Reproductions of Representative Works* (New York, 1913).

5. Michele Cohen, *Public Art for Public Schools* (New York, 2009), 57, 102.

6. *Gari Melchers to Bernard R. Green*, 27 May 1896, Manuscript/Mixed Material Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

7. Two slight variations of Dodge's description of his initial meeting with Hunt exist. Although Dodge's handwritten autobiographical account is no longer extant, it had also been typed, with a copy entering his family's collections. This family copy became the basis for a version published in an article that includes the meeting. Dodge's daughter also wrote about this meeting. See Frederick Platt, "A Brief Autobiography of William de Leftwich Dodge," *The American Art Journal* (Spring 1982), 55, 57, 58; Sara Dodge Kimbrough, *Drawn from Life: The Story of Four American Artists whose Friendship & Work Began in Paris during the 1880s* (Jackson, MS, 1976), 42.

8. Kimbrough, *Drawn from Life*, 48.

9. *Elihu Vedder to Dr. Elihu Vedder, Sr.*, 21 Aug. 1892, Elihu Vedder papers, 1804–1969, bulk 1840–1923, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

10. The eight artists who did contribute murals to the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building were Edwin Howland Blashfield, Kenyon Cox, Robert Lewis Reid, Walter Shirlaw, Edward Emerson Simmons, James Carroll Beckwith (1852–1917), Charles Stanley Reinhart (1844–1896), and Julian Alden Weir (1852–1919).

11. *Elihu Vedder to Bernard R. Green*, 25 Feb. 1895; *Caroline R. Vedder to Bernard R. Green*, 6 Jul. 1895, Manuscript/Mixed Material Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

12. *Caroline R. Vedder to Bernard R. Green*, 6 Jul. 1895, Manuscript/Mixed Material Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

IMAGE CREDITS

Fig. 1. Boston Public Library

Fig. 2. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-ppmsca-31513]

Fig. 3. GRANGER

Fig. 4. Official Views publisher: Chicago Photo-Gravure Co.

Fig. 5. Gari Melchers Home and Studio, University of Mary Washington

Fig. 6. Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of Lucile and Stanley Slocum, 79.22; photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art

Fig. 7. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02247]

Fig. 8. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02246]

Fig. 9. Owned by Allen & Judy Koessel, Chicago, IL

Fig. 10. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02252]

Fig. 11. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02253]

Fig. 12. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02251]

Fig. 13. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02249]

Fig. 14. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-USZ62-101886]

Fig. 15. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-highsm-02248]

Fig. 16. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-USZ62-101885]
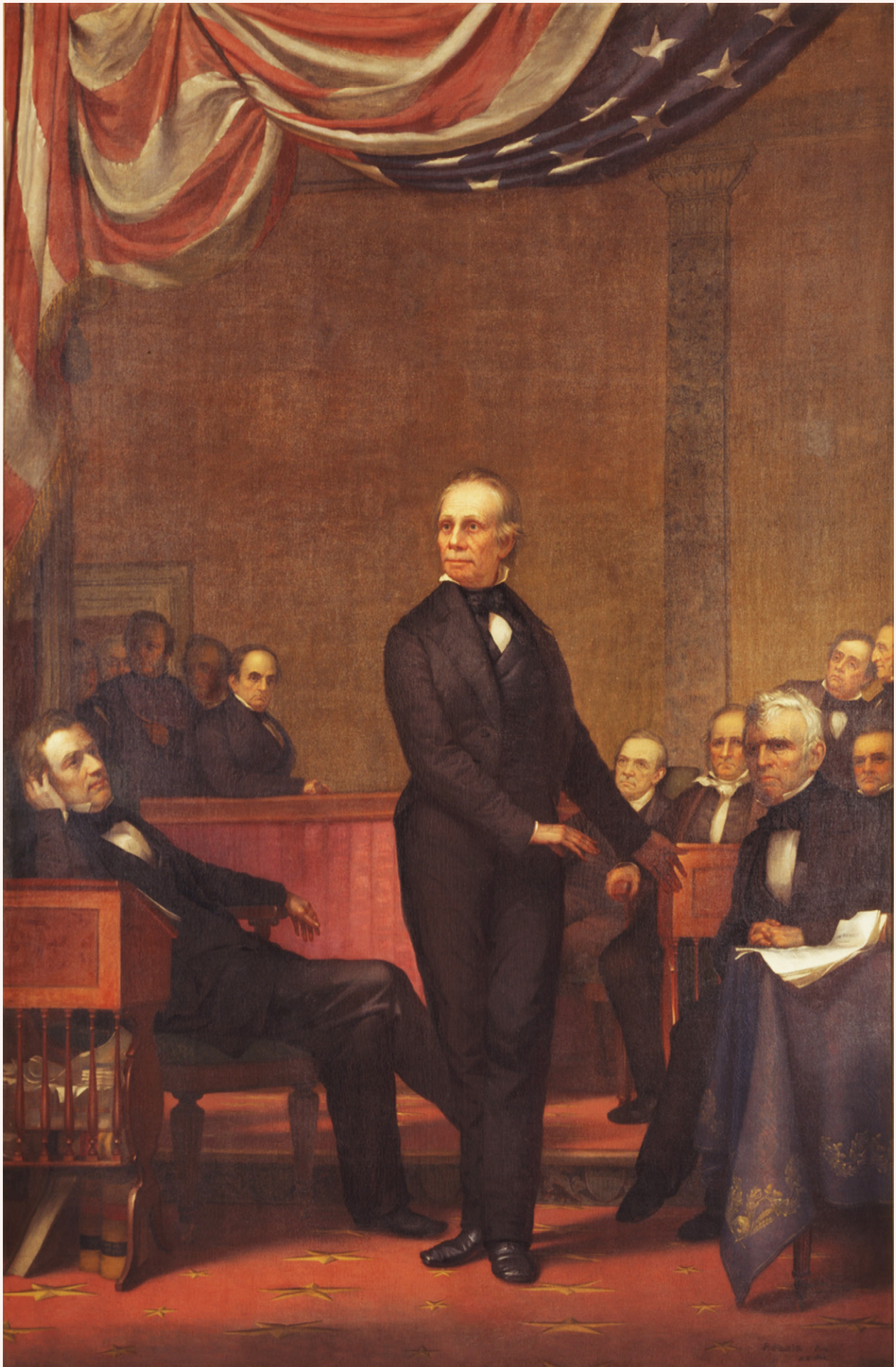
A Victory in Any Contest of Art

by A.E. Burton

The fine-nib pen of Gov. Thomas E. Bramlette scratched across the official letterhead of the Commonwealth of Kentucky as he composed a rejection letter to New York artist Phineas Staunton. He dated the top of the page "May 25, 1866." Staunton's painting had failed to win a competition launched by Kentucky for a full-length portrait of its hometown hero, the late Henry Clay (fig. 1). The governor informed the artist that Clay's own son John praised the entry and was "moved to tears upon the sight of your lifelike representation of his father." Bramlette concluded his missive: "With this high commendation of your work, defeat itself is a victory in any contest of art."[1]

One month after the Civil War formally concluded, the commonwealth challenged artists to submit a life-size portrait of Henry Clay (1777–1852), its esteemed statesman whose compromise measures held the Union together for several decades prior to the Civil War. Artists who desired "to contend for the honor of painting Mr. Clay for Kentucky" were required to send their entry to the state capital of Frankfort to be judged in the competition.[2] Only two artists met the one-year deadline to complete a 7' x 11' portrait. The winning artist, German-born William Frye, received a monetary prize and his portrait earned a permanent place in the state capitol (fig. 2). *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate*, the losing entry by Staunton, would spend the next 140 years in a peripatetic state, deteriorating from time and circumstance until a turn of fate brought the work of art to the United States Capitol.

It is not surprising that Phineas Staunton (1817–1867) entered Kentucky's portrait competition.
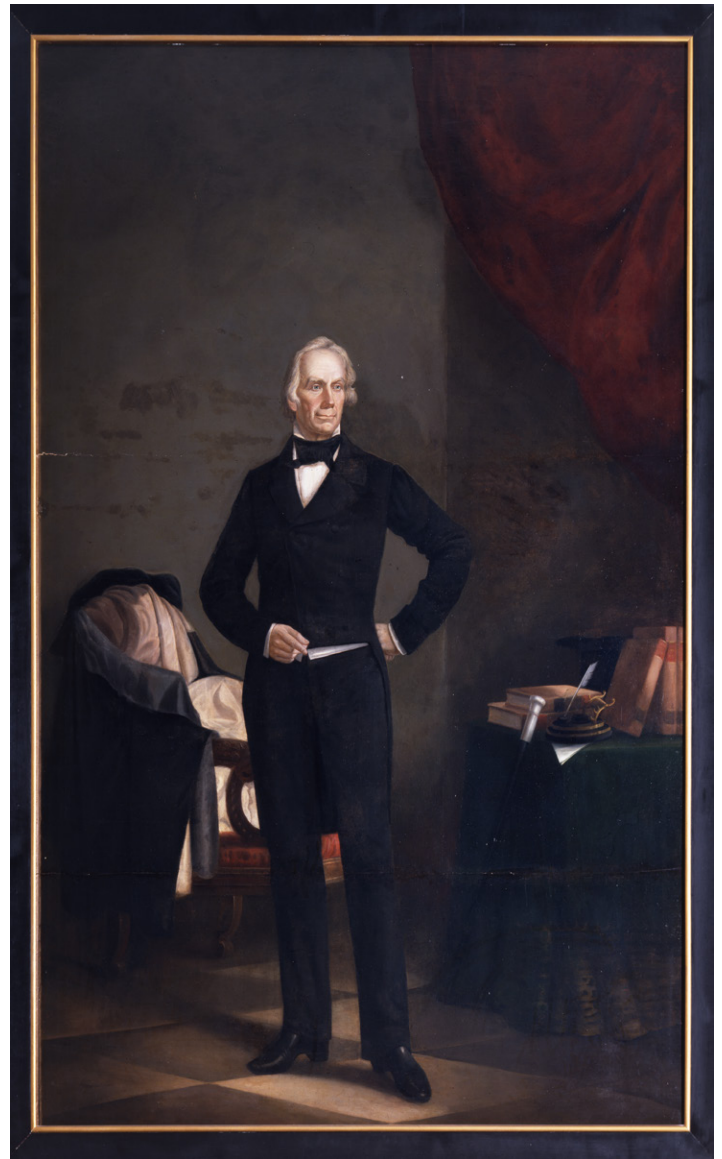

Fig. 2. Henry Clay *by William Frye (oil on canvas, 1866)*

Fig. 1 (left). Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate *by Phineas Staunton (oil on canvas, 1866)*

Staunton (fig. 3), a largely self-taught, itinerant artist who took some training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, held Clay in high personal regard. In the 1840s, Staunton completed several head-and-shoulder-length portraits and at least one full-length painting of Clay. According to contemporary newspaper accounts, Staunton drew the Kentucky favorite "from life."[3] Though there are no recorded sittings between the statesman and the artist, Clay's many political speeches and Staunton's travels across the east coast could have provided ample opportunity for the artist to observe and sketch the highly public figure.
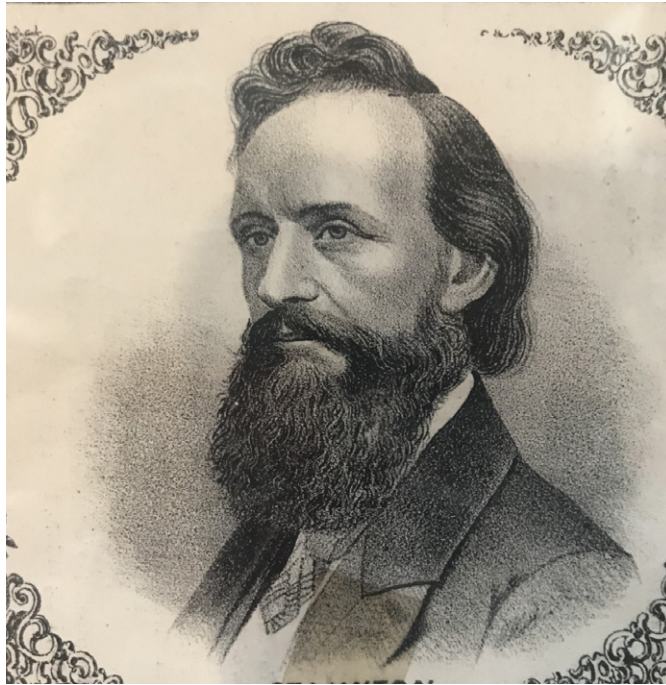

Fig. 3. Phineas Staunton (engraving, n.d.)

The illustrious congressional career of Henry Clay spanned the first half of the nineteenth century. Clay came to Washington, D.C. in 1806 to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate, despite being shy of the constitutional age requirement of 30 years. After filling a second vacancy in the Senate from 1810 to 1811, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, in which he served almost continuously from 1811 to 1825. He was elected Speaker of the House on his very first day in office as a representative. Clay quickly made a name for himself as a War Hawk, one of the young politicians who aroused anti-British sentiment and supported the War of 1812. In 1814, he served as a commissioner negotiating the Treaty of Ghent to end that same war. During his 14-year span in the House, the highly regarded Clay was elected Speaker six times.

After serving as Pres. John Quincy Adams's secretary of state from 1825 to 1829, Clay began a lengthy stretch in the U.S. Senate that lasted intermittently from 1831 until his death in 1852. Clay distinguished himself as one of that deliberative body's most effective and influential members. A man of exceptional political ability, gifted also with personal magnetism, Clay often won the admiration even of his adversaries. Sen. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, whom Clay had outdone in the Compromise of 1850, once declared, "I

don't like Clay. . . . I wouldn't speak to him, but, by God! I love him."[4] Clay earned the sobriquet "Great Compromiser" by using his extraordinary skills to craft several major legislative compromises.

As a lawmaker, Clay excelled at negotiating accommodations and concessions. He may be best known for championing the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850, both designed to solve the problem of admitting new western states while maintaining a delicate balance between the free states of the North and the slave states of the South. In 1850, Clay's complex "omnibus bill" offered concessions to the North, such as admitting California as a free state, but also provided solace to the South by enacting a tougher fugitive slave law. Though Clay's bill died in omnibus form, his Compromise of 1850 managed to survive. When Clay left Washington because of poor health, Sen. Stephen Douglas of Illinois carried the torch. The "Little Giant" split Clay's omnibus into five separate bills, winning enactment of each major provision. Clay's last compromise helped to stave off war for another decade. Henry Clay died in Washington, D.C., of tuberculosis in 1852.

By 1861, political compromise had broken down and the nation plunged into civil war. Clay's enduring legacy as the "Great Compromiser" influenced the decision of his home state of Kentucky to remain loyal to the Union. Kentucky's strategic position as a border state was so vital to the Union effort that Abraham Lincoln reputedly exclaimed, "I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky."

Although Clay's ambitions included the presidency—he ran unsuccessfully for the highest office in the land three times—he found his calling as an orator on the crimson-carpeted floor of the Senate. Clay, Calhoun, and Sen. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts comprised the "Great Triumvirate," known for persuasive oratory and prowess in debate. Longtime Senate door-

Fig. 4. The United States Senate, A.D. 1850 *by Robert Whitechurch (engraving after Peter Rothermel, 1855). Renowned orator Henry Clay delivers his 1850 Compromise address to a full visitor gallery and chamber, including fellow "Great Triumvirate" orators John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster.*

keeper Isaac Bassett spent a career closely observing all three lions of the Senate and insisted, "It was reserved for Mr. Clay to eclipse them all…there was a fascinating grandeur and charm in his eloquence that was simply indescribable, and that…could never be equaled."[5]

Clay's oratorical gestures and magnetism mesmerized colleagues on the Senate Chamber floor and the public in the galleries (fig.4). Clay's colleague, Rep. John Wentworth of Illinois, described the orator in action:

Although the Senate and galleries would always be filled when it was announced that Mr. Clay was to speak, yet it was always with the expectation and hope that some one would interrupt him, and a grand, intellectual sparring exposition would take place. Of all men whom I ever heard, I never knew one who could endure so much interruption and discuss so many side issues, and yet finish his speech with the entire facts and the entire line of argument marked out in his mind from the beginning, as Mr. Clay. Could the enemies of Mr. Clay have formed a combination never to interrupt him, nor be interrupted by him, they would have deprived him of much of his senatorial glory. The best speeches of Calhoun,

Webster, and Benton were well considered, and read now much as when delivered. Not so with Mr. Clay's best speeches. They were unpremeditated, and as much a surprise to himself as to his audience. Short-hand reporting had not then reached its present condition. Thus, Clay must suffer with posterity incapable of hearing the varied intonations of his ever-pleasing voice, or of seeing his gesticulations, his rising upon his toes, his stamp of the foot, his march down the aisles until his long fingers would almost touch the president's desk, and his backward tread to his seat, all the while speaking; his shake of the head, his dangling hair, and his audience in the galleries rising and leaning over as if to catch every syllable.[6]

Artist Phineas Staunton captures for posterity some of the senator's inimitable professional mannerisms in *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate*. The twisting torso, artfully placed foot, elegant hand gestures, and deliberate arm movements reflect Clay's physical grace when delivering an address on the floor of the Senate. These gestures also associate the nineteenth-century statesman with ancient Roman orators commemorated in classical statuary with arms lifted in speech and legs grounded in contrapposto stance. In Staunton's oil painting, Clay's oratorical pose also serves to heighten the distinguished senator's portentous gaze. Even as Clay's arm directs the viewer to a document bearing the date 1851, his crystal-clear blue eyes lift toward the distance with an implied timelessness.

The sensitive handling of Clay by Staunton is a departure from the idealized public persona typically depicted of the famed Kentucky politician. The thin hair, creased shoes, and particularly, the furrowed brow in *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* humanize Clay, a man in the winter of his life with grave concerns about rifts in the nation. It was this countenance that moved Clay's son to tears when he viewed the portrait with Kentucky's governor in 1866. The younger Clay observed to Governor Bramlette, "Mr. Staunton, in my opinion gives lifelike expression almost if not quite impossible to be excelled on canvas." He also praised the painting's incomparable merit and resemblance (figs. 5a & 5b).[7]

Clay's popularity and importance in American politics are reflected in the sheer number of images of
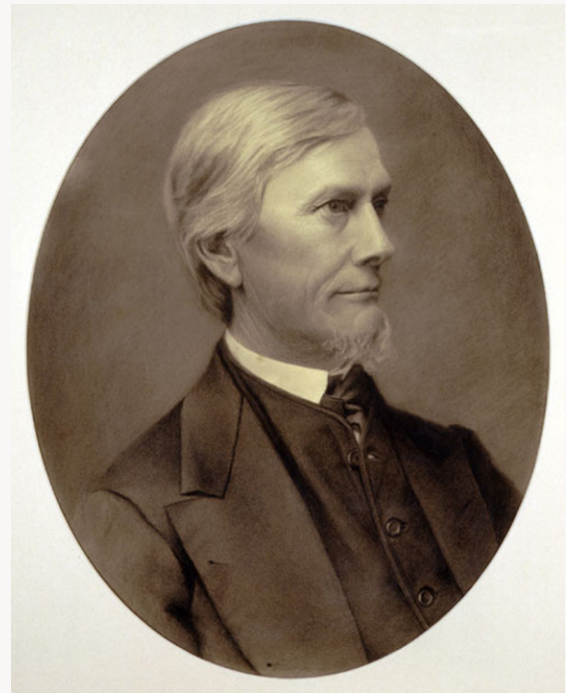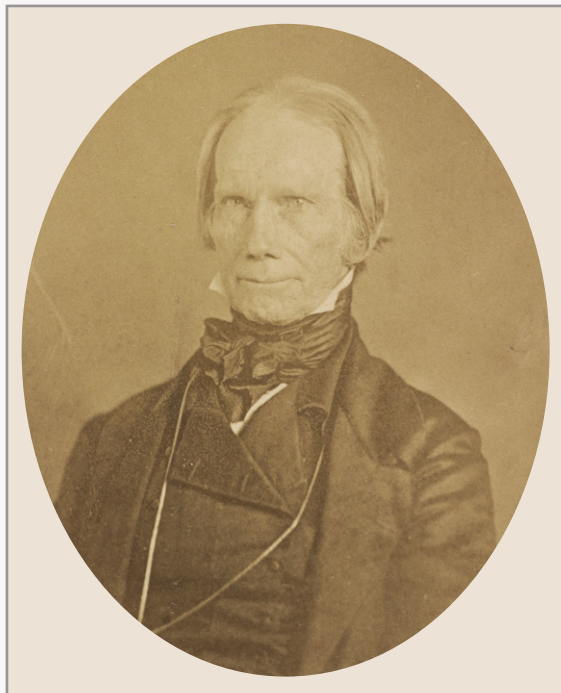
Figs. 5a and 5b. Henry Clay *(left, photograph by Frederick De Bourg Richards, 1845) affirms the accuracy of Staunton's painted likeness of the elder statesman, praised even by Clay's own son John (5b, right). "Ashland," the Clay Family Estate in Lexington, Kentucky, was the painting's first home for several years.*

him produced during the nineteenth century. The U.S. Senate has collected nearly 20 depictions of Clay in the form of statues, busts, paintings, and prints. With such thorough representation of Clay in its holdings, why did the Senate acquire Staunton's *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* in 2007—a painting that had lost Kentucky's portrait competition and certainly had seen better days (fig. 6)? The massive canvas's deteriorated condition was not insignificant. Stains, tears, previous repair work, and missing paint topped the list of its misfortunes. Paint that did remain on the brittle canvas flaked off at the slightest touch, and the larger-than-life-size canvas hung slack on its stretcher. Yet one look at Staunton's painting revealed an inherent value.

Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate claims a scope much broader than that of a single portrait. Staunton depicts one of the institution's most effective members surrounded by 12 eminent colleagues (fig. 7). The figures at Henry Clay's side

Fig. 6. Prior to conservation, the monumental painting suffered tears, stains, flaking paint, and layers of grime, all of which obscured many of the painting's carefully rendered details.

include such antebellum greats as Senators William Seward of New York, Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Lewis Cass of Michigan, Steven Douglas of Illinois, Sam Houston of Texas, and Kentucky's Joseph Underwood and John Crittenden. Sen. R.M.T. Hunter of Virginia, and Representatives Robert Letcher and George Robertson of Kentucky congregate in the background near the dark-eyed Daniel Webster and the towering figure of the uniformed, 6'5" war hero Gen. Winfield Scott. This cast of characters alone would render the painting of interest to the U.S. Senate, but there was yet another significant reason

Fig. 7. Identification of figures (left to right): Seward, Hunter, Letcher, Scott, Robertson, Webster, Clay, Underwood, Houston, Crittenden, Cass, Benton, Douglas.

this painting bore relevance. The historic Old Senate Chamber, the room in which the Senate met from 1810 until 1859, serves as the impressive setting.

The Senate's "Golden Age" in the first half of the nineteenth century is inextricably associated with the semicircular forum known today as the Old Senate Chamber. During its residence in this chamber, the Senate grew from a small advisory council to the primary venue for the great national debates of the mid-nineteenth century. Here the body deliberated the issues of slavery, territorial expansion, and economic policy affecting the nation. It was in this room that Clay shone in his finest hours as "The Great Compromiser" and forged the famed Compromise of 1850. In January of 1859, the Senate moved into a larger chamber with state-of-the-art improvements in the Capitol's newly constructed north wing, but the importance of the Old Senate Chamber as witness to history endures.

Despite the historic relevance of the Old Senate Chamber, no early photographs of the room exist. Information about the furnishings and interior decoration of the chamber must be gleaned from nineteenth-century Senate expenditure reports; accounts written by reporters and diarists; and engravings, woodcuts, and lithographs, most of which aimed at capturing newsworthy political scenes that played out in the chamber rather than at accurately documenting the room's appearance. When Staunton's *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* surfaced in 2006, it stirred great interest despite its condition flaws, for, significantly, it provided visual documentation of one of the most storied rooms in the Capitol.

Until Staunton's *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* came to the attention of the Senate, only three artists were known to have made historical paintings of the amphitheater-shaped Old Senate Chamber. One of the paintings, by New York artist Peter F. Rothermel, is presumed lost and known only through Robert E. Whitechurch's engraving,
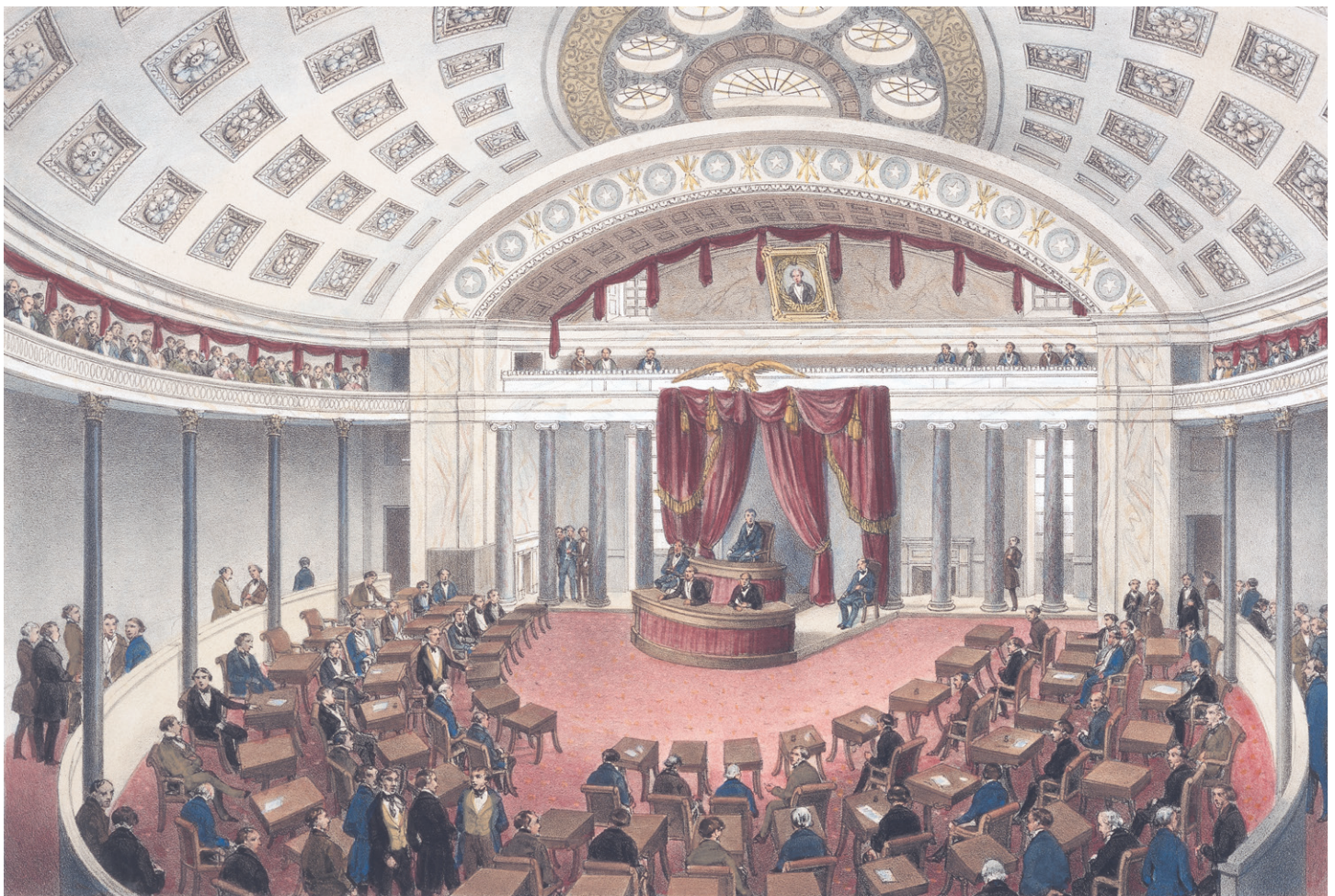

Fig. 8. Senate Chamber *(lithograph by Deroy after Augustus Köllner, 1848) captures the gold-star-on-crimson carpet pattern used in the Old Senate Chamber.*

The United States Senate, A.D. 1850, based on the c. 1850 painting (see fig. 4). A second work, *Daniel Webster Addressing the Senate* by Eliphalet Brown, now privately owned, generated popular nineteenth-century prints such as the 1860 lithograph by James M. Edney, *Daniel Webster Addressing the United States Senate / In the Great Debate on the Constitution and the Union 1850*. The third painting, Webster's *Reply to Hayne*, completed in 1851 by George P.A. Healy, belongs to the Boston Art Commission.

The discovery of *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* allowed the Senate to acquire a painting of historic merit, one that provides a highly informed look at the Old Senate Chamber as it appeared in Clay's time. To have rendered the chamber with such accuracy would have been no easy feat for any artist of the 1860s. When the Senate moved to its new chamber in the North extension in 1859, the Old Senate Chamber was quickly remodeled for use by the U.S. Supreme Court. Key features of the room were removed, such as the vice president's dais, canopy, risers, and the upper galleries. Staunton's knowledge of the 1850s Clay-era chamber strongly suggests that he had observed and sketched the room prior to Kentucky's 1865 competition.

Staunton traveled frequently for work as a portrait painter, and he may have visited the U.S. Capitol as early as the 1840s, as suggested by his full-length Clay portrait from 1847 owned by Brooklyn Borough Hall.[8] Additional opportunity to observe the Old Senate Chamber could have come in 1858 when Staunton visited Washington, D.C. to attend the National Convention of Artists, a "who's who" of prominent American artists voicing a patriotic desire "to com-

Fig. 9. Staunton's still-life detail of Sen. Seward's Senate Chamber desk

memorate the past, illustrate the present, and illuminate the track to a glorious future" through "art intended for the adornment of our National buildings."[9] Though there are no surviving sketches or written records by Staunton to shed light on how or when he captured the chamber of the Senate's "Golden Age," the level of verisimilitude Staunton imparts to his painting strongly indicates he studied the room and its decorative features and understood key traditions of the Senate.

The Old Senate Chamber's crimson carpet with its pattern of gold stars is one of the most striking features of Staunton's painting. The star carpet is captured in a number of popular images including *Senate Chamber*, a lithograph by Augustus Köllner from c. 1848 (fig. 8) and *The Assault in the U.S. Senate Chamber on Senator Sumner* from the 7 June 1856 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Stars were not the only pattern used for the room's carpet, however. Engravings of the chamber show that the room's rug also occasionally sported multi-colored geometric designs. Tobacco habits of the nineteenth century, as well as poor aim at spittoons, necessitated frequent replacement of the chamber's wall-to-wall carpet. Carpet replacement brought about changes to the patterns. English novelist Charles Dickens thought Clay "one of the most agreeable and fascinating men I ever saw," but had strong words when it came to the "handsomely carpeted" floor in the Senate Chamber. "I will merely observe, that I strongly recommend all strangers not to look at the floor; and if they happen to drop anything, though it be their purse, not to pick it up with an ungloved hand on any account." Dickens whiffed that, as such, the carpets "do not admit of being

described."[10] Though patterns of the oft-replaced carpet may have varied over the years, the gold-star-on-crimson pattern seen in *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* was a perennial favorite, and it is the pattern used in the room today.

Staunton renders one of the Senate's most charming still-life scenes in his monumental painting: a well-used Senate Chamber desk (fig. 9). Leather-bound Senate journals slant against the desk to the left of Clay. Haphazardly stacked books and loose documents, their edges gently rolled and poking out from the spindles of the desk's lower bookshelf, attest to the manner in which senators used the furniture. Until the first Senate office building opened in 1908, a chamber desk served as a U.S. senator's workspace in the Capitol. William Seward, seated at the desk to the left of Clay, appears to have filled his desk's lower shelf to capacity with official documents and tomes. *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* affirms popular written accounts of overstuffed desks. One mid-nineteenth-century visitor to the Senate noted "We were struck with the different aspect of the desks; on some the papers were arranged with much precision, while others looked careless and desultory, as if in a state of siege."[11]

The historic Senate Chamber desks—still used by the Senate today—were designed in 1819 by 27-year-old New York cabinetmaker Thomas Constantine (fig. 10). After the British burned the Capitol in 1814, Constantine won the contract to supply 48 desks for Members at $34 each, as well as 48 chairs at $46 each. (Additional desks and chairs of similar design were made for the Senate as needed, particularly as new states entered the Union.) Staunton cleverly positions a distinctive Senate Chamber desk at an angle in the foreground to show the shape of its sloped writing-box top and scrolled trestle legs to best advantage. Staunton also depicts the Constantine chairs and their short, reeded front legs—right down to the proprietary brass casters, for no detail was too small to escape the observant Staunton. Today, only a handful of the original Constantine chairs are known to exist. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina ravaged Beauvoir, the historic home of Sen. Jefferson Davis in Biloxi, Mississippi, and destroyed one of the few extant chairs. All that remained of the chair was one of its unique, durable brass casters stamped with Thomas Constantine's name (fig. 11).

Those not intimately familiar with the Old Senate Chamber of Henry Clay's era might find it perplexing

Fig. 10. U.S. Senate Chamber Desk XXIX

Fig. 11. Cabinetmaker Thomas Constantine used brass casters similar to this one for the chairs he made for the Senate Chamber.